

Application No. 10/024,269
Amendment dated May 10, 2005
Office Action dated March 10, 2005

Listing of Claims

Claims 1-44 (canceled)

45. (currently amended) A slide case for holding and transporting at least one slide, the slide case comprising:

~~a base comprising four walls connected to a bottom;~~
~~a rack removably positionable within the base and comprising~~
~~a frame comprising~~
substantially planar and parallel opposed first and second side walls,
and
substantially planar and parallel opposed end walls, each of the end walls having ends rigidly connected to ends of the first and second side walls,
a first support bar comprising
a first longitudinal edge extending over a length of, and
connected to, an inner surface of the first side wall to cantilever the first support bar from the first side wall,
~~a second longitudinal edge the first support bar being~~
deflectable with respect to the first side wall, the second longitudinal edge being spaced away from a lowermost portion of the rack to provide a space below the second longitudinal edge adapted to drain fluid used in a slide processing operation; and
a first opening adapted to support one end of a slide, and
a second support bar comprising
a ~~[[first]]~~ third longitudinal edge extending over a length of, and
connected to, an inner surface of the second side wall to cantilever the second support bar from the second side wall,
a fourth longitudinal edge being deflectable with respect to the second side wall, the fourth longitudinal edge being spaced away from the lowermost portion of the rack to provide a space below the fourth longitudinal edge adapted to drain the fluid used in the slide processing operation; and

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a second opening disposed opposite the first opening and adapted to support an opposite end of the slide,
the rack supporting the ends of the slide outside of the slide case during the slide processing operation;
a base comprising four walls connected to a bottom, the rack being removably positionable in the base; and
a cover having a projection on an inner surface and being positionable on the base, the projection on the cover adapted to press against the slide and deflect the support bars, thereby securing the slide between the rack and the cover during transportation of the slide.

46. (currently amended) The slide case in accordance with claim 45 wherein each of the first and second support bars angles downward from a respective inner surface toward lower edges of the opposed ends of the frame, each of the first and second support bars forming an included acute angle with the respective inner surface and comprising respective ends that are spaced away from the end walls ~~opposed ends of the frame.~~

47. (previously presented) The slide case in accordance with claim 45 further comprising pairs of opposed openings in the first and second support bars for holding and transporting a plurality of slides, each of the openings being substantially diamond shaped with two opposed corners of the diamond shape defining a line substantially perpendicular to a first edge of a respective one of the first and second support bars.

48. (previously presented) The slide case in accordance with claim 45 wherein the lower edges of the opposed ends of the frame define a lowermost boundary of the frame, and the sides of the frame have respective lower edges above the lowermost boundary of the frame.

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49. (currently amended) The slide case in accordance with claim 45 further comprising:

a first latch portion disposed on the base; and

a second latch portion disposed on an end wall ~~the frame~~ such that upon positioning the rack within the base, the first and second latch portions are placed in juxtaposition to releasably secure the rack in the base.

50. (currently amended) The slide case in accordance with claim 49 wherein the first latch portion comprises a detent disposed on a wall of the base, the second latch portion comprises a recess disposed in the end wall ~~an end of the frame~~, and the end wall ~~of the frame~~ is deflectable to permit the detent to be moved with respect to the recess between latched and unlatched positions.

51. (previously presented) The slide case in accordance with claim 45 wherein the projection comprises at least one rib extending substantially perpendicular to a plane of the slide.

52. (currently amended) The slide case in accordance with claim 45 wherein the frame further comprises first and second holes, each hole extending through a different one of the end walls ~~ends of the frame~~ to facilitate picking up and carrying the rack.

Claims 53-57 (canceled)

58. (previously presented) The slide case in accordance with claim 45 further comprising a bag containing the cover positioned on the base containing the rack.

59. (previously presented) The slide case in accordance with claim 58 wherein the bag comprises a vacuum sealed barrier bag.

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60. (previously presented) The slide case in accordance with claim 58 wherein the bag comprises an aluminum foil bag.

61. (new) An apparatus for holding a plurality of slides during both a slide processing operation and transportation of the slide, the apparatus comprising:

- a rack comprising

- substantially planar and opposed side walls, and

- substantially planar and opposed end walls connected to the side walls,

- substantially planar support bars, each of the support bars being

- connected to a different one of the side walls and comprising

- a first longitudinal edge extending over a length of, and

- connected to, an inner surface of a respective side wall to cantilever the support bar from the respective side wall,

- a second longitudinal edge being deflectable with respect to the first longitudinal edge and the walls of the rack, the second longitudinal edge being spaced away from a lowermost portion of the rack to provide a space below the second longitudinal edge for drainage of fluid used in a slide processing operation; and

- a plurality of openings located between the first longitudinal edge and the second longitudinal edge and supporting ends of respective slides,

- the rack useable to support the slides, prior to, during and after a slide processing operation;

- a base comprising four substantially mutually perpendicular planar walls connected to a bottom comprising an inner directed surface, the rack being removably positionable in the base with the walls of the rack being immediately adjacent to, and substantially parallel to, the walls of the base; and

- a cover having a projection on an inner surface and being positionable on the base, the projection on the cover pressing against the slides, thereby securing the slides in the rack during transportation of the slides, the rack supporting the slides during both a slide processing operation and transportation of the slides.

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62. (new) The apparatus of claim 61 wherein each of the end walls comprises a handle portion to facilitate lifting, carrying and placement of the rack supporting the slides.

63. (new) An apparatus for holding a plurality of slides during both a slide processing operation and transportation of the slide, the apparatus comprising:

- a rack comprising

- substantially planar and opposed side walls, and
 - substantially planar and opposed end walls connected to the side walls,
 - substantially planar support bars, each of the support bars being

- connected to a different one of the side walls and comprising

- a first longitudinal edge extending over a length of, and
 - connected to, an inner surface of a respective side wall to cantilever the support bar from the respective side wall,

- a second longitudinal edge being deflectable with respect to the first longitudinal edge and the walls of the rack; and

- a plurality of openings located between the first longitudinal edge and the second longitudinal edge and supporting ends of respective slides,

- the rack useable to support the slides prior to, during and after a slide processing operation; and

- a base and a cover, each of the cover and the base comprising

- four substantially mutually perpendicular planar walls, and

- a bottom connected to the mutually perpendicular planar walls and comprising

- an inner directed surface, and

- a projection extending longitudinally and outward from the inner directed surface,

- the rack being removably positionable in the base with the walls of the rack being immediately adjacent to, and substantially parallel to, the walls of the base, and

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the cover being positionable on the base, the projection on the cover pressing against the slides, thereby securing the slides in the rack during transportation of the slides, the rack supporting the slides during both a slide processing operation and transportation of the slides.

64. (new) The apparatus of claim 63 wherein the base is substantially identical to the cover.